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Team France - Marvin Musquin

Ray Archer image

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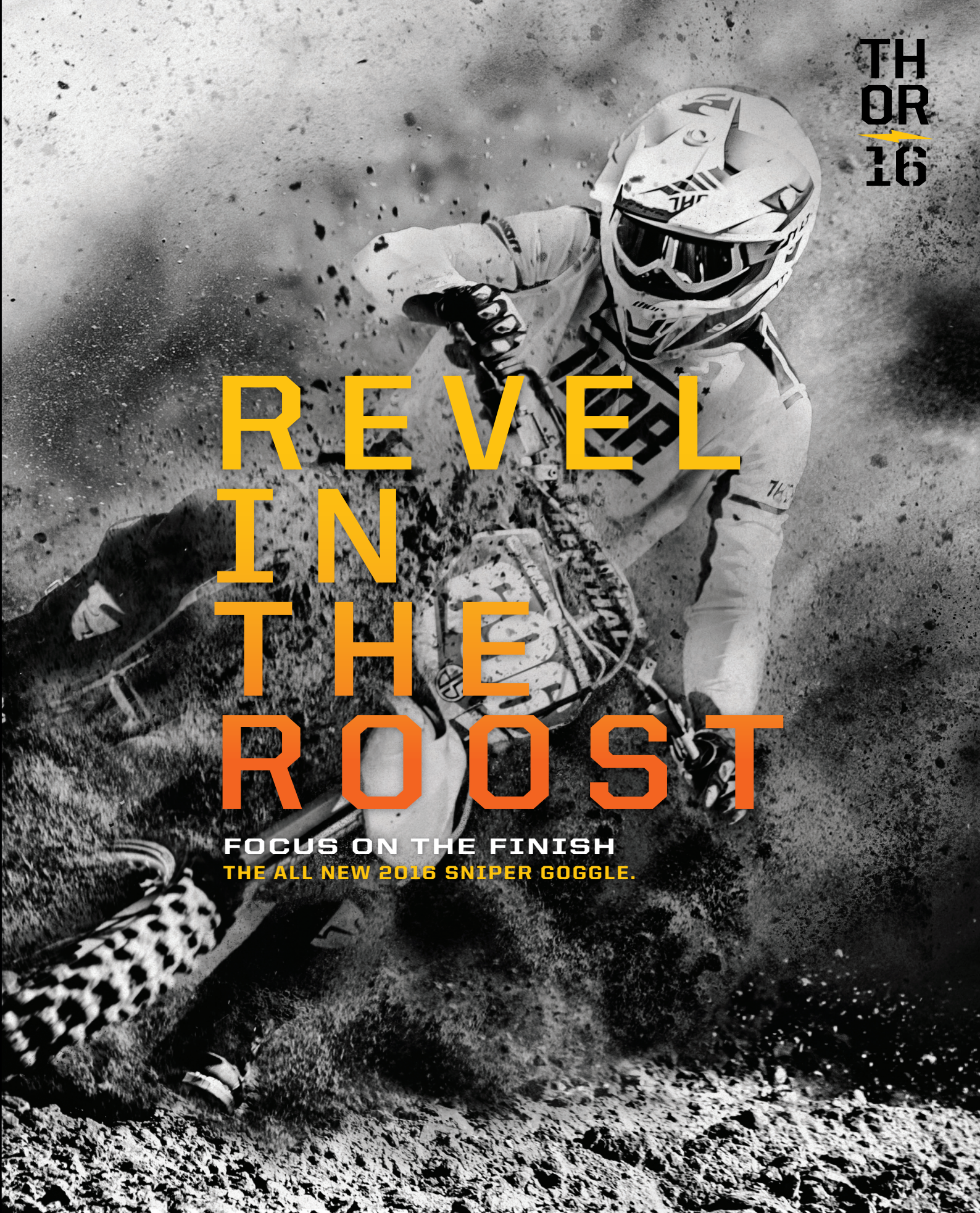
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Story Meyer images Archer, Swijger and Zanzani

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MXON - TEAM FRANCE

It was a performance of perfection. From the moment the teams were picked everyone saw France as the strong favorites and that is how it turned out in the end. A determined effort by Team USA made it a special event, but nobody was going to beat the tri-colors.

Marvin Musquin - MX2

The circuit was in some areas very difficult, like at the top of the circuit on the rollers it was slippery and I had some scary moments, some soft spots and slick spots, plus rocks, it was really challenging. Like I said with this crowd there was no way I could slow down, I was pushing and feeling great because of the crowd. I was looking forward to getting good starts, but I didn't get good starts on Sunday. I impressed myself on the first laps and I was like third in the early laps, and on the 250 I knew I could match the 450s and that was good. I really like Ernee. The first moto to catch Barcia was really cool, but I got too excited and making mistakes and the crowd was going crazy. When I crashed I landed on my back and hurt myself, but with the crowd behind me I just got up and went again. I rode the second moto smarter and was happy about that. I think I had better lines, the crowd was pushing me, helping me, I felt like I was flying because of the crowd. I got a little too excited and I made small mistakes and to pass Justin Barcia on a 250 was awesome. I knew I could do something good on the 250, the track was really technical, but I had so many regrets after the crash. I was like oh man I should have taken it easy and taken second, still four wasn't too bad. The second moto was better with third, it was good and be able to see Romain in first place was cool. He honestly slowed down on a roller to try and block me and honestly I got pissed. I didn't flip him off, but I made a sign to him, like what are you doing. I regret it because I should have settled down and followed him, but I didn't and made a mistake and

DUNLOP

went down. Fortunately we won and that was the most important thing. The Americans fight really hard and they show a lot of heart and today the crowd was cheering for us and to be in France it was huge, but the American's fought really hard and congratulations to them. Oh yes, some areas it was really challenging and bumpy and easy to make mistakes and you had to be smooth and clean and clean going down the hills so you could be clean going up the hills, like I said it was really easy to make mistakes. It is the biggest win of my career, of course. US has been good for me, winning the championship (SX) this year, I knew it would be great and I was really happy on my bike, almost riding with a smile. The second moto I was third and I got pain on my hand with blisters and so, but I kept pushing and I was happy with myself. It's huge, I had a tough season in the US and it was a bummer to not be picked, they picked riders who raced the GPs, but this year our team manager came to America twice and he could see my program with Aldon Baker we were doing good and he picked me for the 250 class. To be back on the French team at Ernee I really didn't want to disappoint anybody. I am so happy for all the guys.

Gautier Paulin - MXGP

Everything was about fighting to try and keep our title with all the best countries and their best riders here. To defend the title in France in front of all the home fans was amazing. They were reaching for us – it's amazing the feeling they gave us when we ride and even in the paddock. I definitely want to thank my teammates for their great job, and the team and the French federation who did an awesome job to give us the best material for this event. The hardest thing after winning last year was to keep it again here in front of the home crowd on home soil, so I don't have words to describe the feeling of winning again. I can now celebrate this before we defend again at Mag-

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giora next year.

Romain Febvre - Open

I gave 100%, I was at the top of my level. The first moto it might have looked like I was good, but I didn't feel comfortable and I was really tight and really careful everywhere I rode. To win the moto was good, but I didn't feel that great. The second moto was much better, I was riding really well, but Ben Townley was just unbelievable, really good. I caught him and passed him, I saw he was staying behind me, and I wanted to just make a gap, maybe a few seconds, but it was impossible to make a gap. I gave 100% and we were so well prepared for this race. You know, normally on a GP I don't have any pressure, even fighting for a GP win or the title, I never felt pressure, but this weekend I felt it for sure. Mainly because of the crowd, 30,000 or 40,000 waiting for the victory and you could feel that. It was my first MXoN and I didn't know what to expect, even on Saturday we won all the moto's and then the crowd expected a win for sure and they trusted us. It was great. They (the crowd) helped a lot, gives pressure, but it is positive pressure and they also gave 100% and it was like you had your mechanic running around the whole track following you and it was a great point.

NATIONS CLASSIFICATION

1 France 14
1 Race 3 FEBVRE, Romain Yamaha
1 Race 2 FEBVRE, Romain Yamaha
3 Race 2 MUSQUIN, Marvin KTM
4 Race 1 MUSQUIN, Marvin KTM
5 Race 3 PAULIN, Gautier Honda
7 Race 1 PAULIN, Gautier Honda

2 USA 16
1 Race 1 BARCIA, Justin Yamaha
2 Race 2 WEBB, Cooper Yamaha
3 Race 3 BARCIA, Justin Yamaha
5 Race 2 MARTIN, Jeremy Yamaha
5 Race 1 MARTIN, Jeremy Yamaha
6 Race 3 WEBB, Cooper Yamaha

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Motocross Illustrated AWARDS

Story Meyer images Zanzani, Archer and Swijger

What a magnificent season it has been in both the FIM championships and the AMA championships. A new star is born in Europe in Romain Febvre and the old guard in America of Ryan Dungey again proved too consistent for his rivals. Amazing races all around the world, and even more to come in 2016. Countries like Qatar, Thailand, Malaysia, Argentina, Mexico, America and all over Europe will once again awaken our love of motocross.

ATHENA
PIRELLI
Twin Air

Riders like Febvre, Herlings, Cairoli, Desalle, Paulin, Nagl and so many more will go into battle and we as fans will remember why this sport continues to grow.

Rider of the Year: A world title and 1-1 at the MXoN automatically gives you the top spot and Romain Febvre did that and more. He also beat the American riders at the USGP and on their home turf. It wouldn't surprise me if the open practice and moto's of the Qatar round of the MXGP series is as interesting to the public as it was this year with Ryan Villopoto racing. Can Febvre continue to win, or will it be MXGP legend Antonio Cairoli who takes the glory.

MX2 rider of the year: Going with Jeremy Martin on this one He beat Marvin Musquin for the AMA 250cc title and showed great resilience at the MXoN to finish second overall in the MX2 class behind Musquin. Two AMA 250cc titles in two years and beating guys like Musquin, Cooper Webb and all the best American riders shows he is a little special.

Rookie of the Year: Romain Febvre. That man again. Comes into the MXGP class as a rookie and walks away with the championship, beating home guys like Ryan Villopoto, Antonio Cairoli, Clement Desalle, Gautier Paulin and so many others. He kept out of trouble and his remount and win in France, with broken handlebars was just things legends are made of. His 2015 performance was Everts or Cairoli like, and that's as big a compliment as I can give to a rookie.

Event of the Year: It's going to get it every single season isn't it, the Monster Energy Motocross of Nations. A huge event, bigger than 2005 and this monster called MXoN just

gets bigger and bigger. Have to wonder when it will hit its peak and we might get a year that it isn't so special. The home victory by France, the massive crowd, the strong performance by Team USA made it special.

GP of the Season: Assen gets my vote hands down. This was a very special moment in the sports history as we went to a road racing facility and the event was miles better than an old school GP. Having attended my first ever motocross race in 1971 with names like De Coster, Robert, Aberg and many more I am as old school as it gets, but this Assen GP was massive. If the USGP at Charlotte Motor Speedway is anywhere near as good then we are in for a really exciting event.

Race of the Season: As it often does Matterley Basin produced the race of the season. The large British crowd were given an early present as Max Anstie led from Valentin Guillod and MX2 king-pin Jeffrey Herlings fighting through the pack. Anstie led nearly every lap before Guillod passed him and then Herlings passed both for the moto victory.

Toughest rider of the year: Antonio Cairoli without question. He might not have picked up his ninth world title, but the performances of the MXGP legend under serious pain showed the real character of the Italian rider.

Moment of the Season: Ryan Villopoto crashes out of the Grand Prix of Italy. You could nearly pick half a dozen RV moments as the moment of the season. Despite only lasting four and a half GPs the American champion brought a lot of respect to the MXGP class. Europe owes him a big dept for putting the Grand Prix back on top of World Motocross.

AMA vs FIM in 2016: The two series will always be locked in this debate. For decades the GP media tried to tell how we were the equal of the AMA series, but now that has been reversed as excuses like RV wasn't fit, MXoN

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KTM
PAULIN

doesn't count and hard pack isn't real motocross. And let us not mention sand….The verdict once again goes to Grand Prix, although the two are so close now you could call it a draw.

Fightback of the season: Romain Febvre and his GP of France performance. Crashing hard and bending his handlebars he continued on to win the GP and it started his unthinkable chase for a world title in his debut MXGP season. Holding down fourth place in the championship and having won only a moto at the previous rounds British GP that French GP win started the fire to would eventually see him crowned World MXGP champion. He would win 13 of the next 20 moto's and be seen as the new man in world motocross.

Disappointment of the year: The two young men who five years ago brought so much pleasure Jeffrey Herlings and Ken Roczen spend the 2015 season looking brilliant and brittle at the same time. Let's hope 2016 is kinder to these two exciting talents.

Journalist of the Year: Adam Wheeler. Continues to be one of the most neutral media guys from both sides of the Atlantic. Professional and hard working. He works for a bunch of magazines throughout the world, runs his own e-magazine (OTOR) and can be seen on most weekends on MXGP.tv with his good mate Paul Malin.

Photographer of the Year: Massimo Zanzani. The Italian veteran works harder than just about anyone on a GP weekend. His images can be seen on MXGP.com and also in many magazines throughout Europe. He also works for Yamaha for decades.

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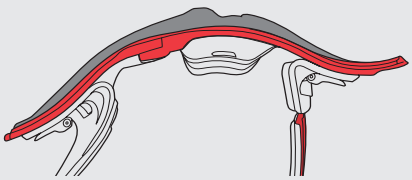

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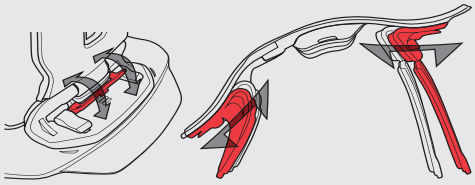

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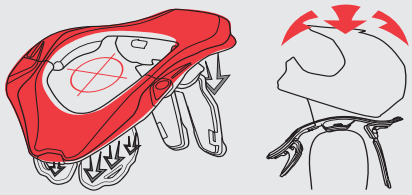

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2015 Monster Energy Cup

MEC TO ROCZEN

Story Geoff Meyer imagess Suzuki and KTM

Former World and AMA champion Ken Roczen won the Monster Energy Cup last weekend at Sam Boyd Stadium. The Suzuki rider produced consistent results with 1-4-1 scores to take the victory, ahead of Ryan Dungey and Jason Anderson. “I knew that I wanted to take the Joker Lane on the last lap, and it worked out for me,” said Roczen. “I looked forward to coming out strong for the second Main Event and that worked out well for me. Getting the overall and 100,00 dollars was also a nice way to end the night.

Roczens former KTM teammate Dungey earned second after finishing with 2-5-2 scores from the three individual pro main events.

The Monster Energy Cup event is unique in that the riders race in three motos that combine for the overall win. In addition, the riders have to take a joker lane on one lap of their choosing during the main event which slows them down and allows for tighter racing.

“I had a lot of fun out here today,” Dungey said. “This event is always unique and exciting. I’m glad to finish on the podium and happy to go back home and continue Supercross training as we approach the new season.”

Rockstar Energy Husqvarna Factory Racing’s Jason Anderson kicked the night off in a dramatic way as he scored the holeshot in moto one and crossed the finish line in first

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94

only to realize he forgot to take the mandatory joker lane. He was penalized five positions which took him down to 6th.

The sixth, first, and third place finishes earned Jason 3rd overall but the three consecutive holeshots earned Jason the coveted holeshot award. Although the taste of a million dollars was so close, Anderson was thrilled on his second and third moto redemptions and looks forward to the 2016 Supercross season.

“Had a good night with getting three holeshots and a third overall,” Anderson said. “Missing the joker lane in the first race was really disappointing but a win in moto two made up for it. Starts usually are a struggle for me so holeshotting all three rounds is a huge plus.”

Monster Energy Cup Class Overall

1. Ken Roczen, Suzuki (1-4-1)
2. Ryan Dungey, KTM (2-5-2)
3. Jason Anderson, Husky (6-1-3)
4. Justin Barcia, Yamaha (5-3-4)
5. Davi Millsaps, KTM (3-6-6)
6. Trey Canard, Honda (10-2-14)
7. Justin Brayton, KTM (11-7-12)
8. Blake Baggett, Suzuki (4-9-18)
9. Christian Craig, Honda (14-14-5)
10. Chad Reed, Yamaha (9-16-8)

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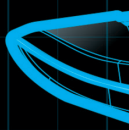

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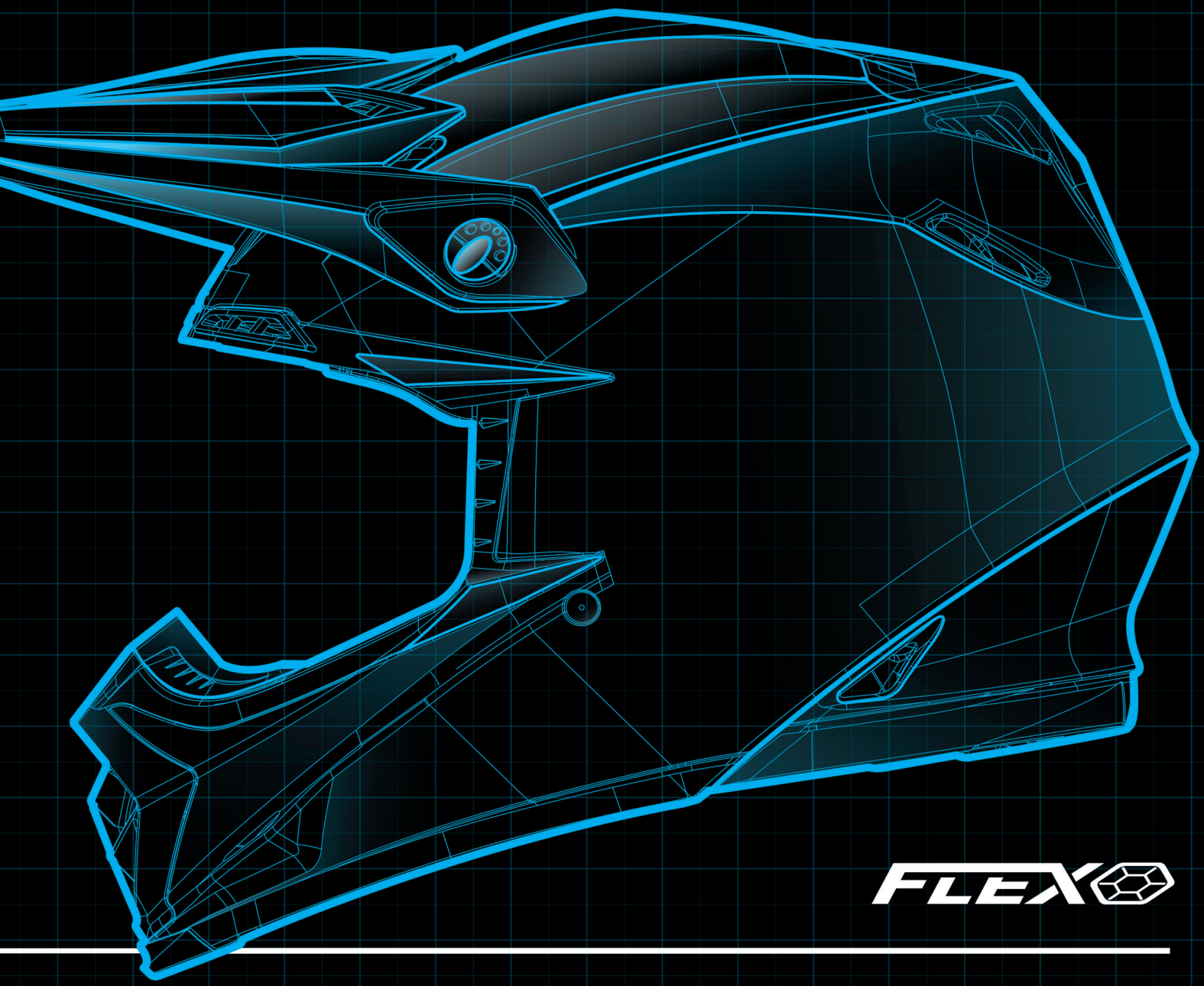

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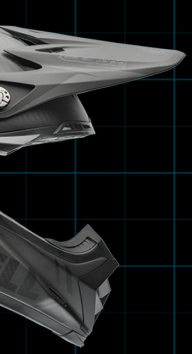

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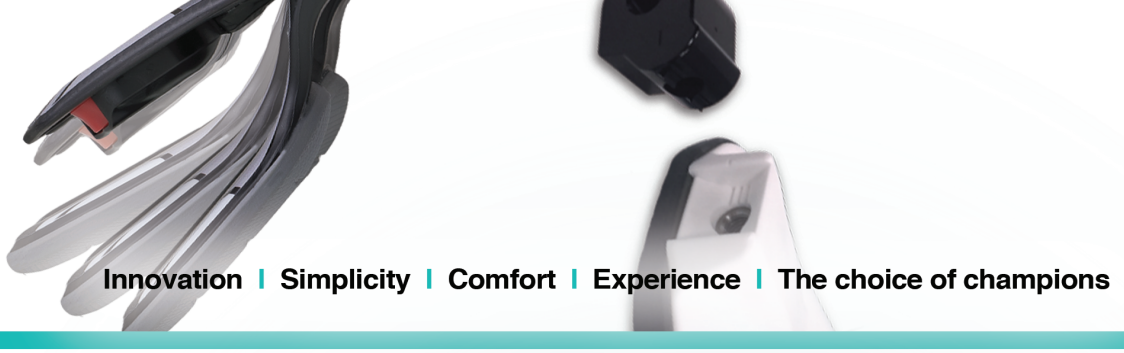

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AMERICANS IN MXGP

Story Geoff Meyer images RayArcher

There is no doubt the 2016 MXGP season brought the two worlds closer to together. AMA and FIM met on a handful of occasions and it was often fireworks. While we all expected the arrival of Ryan Villopoto to the MXGP series to attract more attention, we never expected so many twists and turns. Three American GP winners this year. It's been a while since that has happened and no doubt with the sudden interest by AMA riders like Cooper Webb, Justin Barcia, Jessy Nelson, Josh Grant and several more the AMA vs FIM battles should only get better as the 2016 season comes around.

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Californian hot-shot Josh Grant who rode the USGP at Glen Helen is eyeing a GP ride if anyone wants to offer him one. Grant who is without a ride in America is considered one of the best in the world, and would no doubt be welcomed into the GP scene.

“It was great to be part of the experience (of the USGP), and I really enjoyed it; I would definitely consider MXGP in the future if there was an offer on the table. Villopoto gave me plenty of good advice on how to take on the weekend. I felt good to win two races out of three. I was leading the first GP moto too until I ran over my own right foot and twisted it about six or seven laps in. It was a really well run event.”

Ryan Villopoto is the king of AMA Supercross and Motocross. When he arrived in Qatar for the opening round of the series many insiders in the GP paddock figured he might struggle with the new system and different competition. Turns out though it didn’t take him long to get his mojo. A week later in Thailand he blew the doors off the opposition.

“It was a lot different to what I was used to and that was a big obstical to get over. The tracks are smaller, and not as groomed as in America and change every week. I think the track in Thailand not only new for all of us, it is also a little more jumpy than the usual GP track and suited me. For sure I knew there will be weeks when a track suits me best, and other weeks when the track suits the European guys. There’s a strategy to GP racing but I was gradually getting used to it. I got pushed around a little in the first few turns of race two in Thailand, but when I got to third I just tried to be smart, and at this stage of the season a safe third is better than risking a crash. It was cool to go to Thailand and see things which you would normally only see in the movies; it’s a bizarre experience.”

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Thomas Covington is the most experiences of the American riders when it comes to racing the Grand Prix's. He has shown improvement every single year and finally got a surprising GP victory in Mexico this year. Covington had planned to move back to America this year, but enjoyed the experience of travelling to world and learning his trade in Europe so much that he decided to stay.

"It was so good to finally get a win. I've been pushing hard always and it's been a tough two years with a lot of bad races, a few good ones and going to Mexico to get the win is unbelievable. I hope to keep this going. I really love racing the Grand Prix's. I think I can learn a lot from it and when I eventually do move back to America I will return a better rider."

Jessy Nelson who won the MX2 class at the USGP really enjoyed the experience and wouldn't mind racing in Europe if the chance turned up.

"I mean hey, in a few years if I'm looking for a ride or something and there's something opening up in Europe I think I'll think about doing that. I like the way it was ran. It was cool. Awesome event. I was asked to do the USGP probably six months ago. They were like, you won't get as much time off after outdoors but if you want to do it… I was like, yeah, why not? I'll see how I do against the Europeans. I never raced them. I never really watched them in person or anything like that. So I thought it was a cool opportunity to get my face out there and meet some new people. It was cool. Awesome event, just a different style racing. They didn't prep between Saturday and Sunday. It was just cool. It's a great feeling."

Team USA rider Cooper Webb has put his hand up and mentioned what a great job MXGP (Youthstream) have done in getting the

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Charlotte Motor Speedway into the calendar. Webb who mentioned to MXGP at the MXoN that he loves the MXGP series and watches a lot of the races seems more than interested to be involved. If Webb is in expect many more to follow.

“Being from North Carolina and growing up racing in NC this is huge. Not only for North Carolina but for the sport of motocross. Being able to put NASCAR and motocross in the same venue is truly unbelievable for this sport.

“Yes I know there is Daytona SX but to bring all the best riders from Europe and the best in the USA to race a motocross race inside of Charlotte Motor Speedway is truly unbelievable. The best racers in the world racing in the southeast in a NASCAR venue, thank you @mxgp for making a huge step. Hope to see everyone there September 2nd!”

In an interview on American website Transworldmotocross Justin Barcia had mentioned that he would move to Europe straight away if possible. The American racer who lead Team USA at this year’s MXoN enjoys coming to Europe.

“France is cool,” Barcia said. “I’ve been to Italy a lot, and I would move to Europe straight away if I could. I enjoy it, and I like the food, the women and the coffee. Seems like they are more fit there. People also like to ride their bicycles their lot, and I am into that.”

Barcia then told us at the MXoN that he has tried to get a GP deal in Europe, but no team has approached him.

“I really like the system and the attitude of the Europeans. I have wanted to race in the MXGP series for a while now, but nothing ever comes up. I hope to do it in my career, I think it would be cool.”

Some of the best AMA riders are seriously looking at the move to Europe and to the FIM Motocross World Championships. I don’t think too many people on either side of the Atlantic Ocean would complain about a little more AMA vs FIM.

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